

REMARKS

Claims 8-16, 18 and 24 are pending in the application. The Examiner is thanked for indicating the allowance of claims 8-16 and 24. Claim 18 stands rejected. Claim 18 has been amended.

Rejection of Claim 18 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) As Being Anticipated By Weatherly

Claim 18 as amended recites directly coupling a plurality of independent buoyant hull portions to the main body of a ship.

For example, referring, *e.g.*, to FIG. 3 and paragraphs 20-24 of the application, a ship 300 has a plurality of exclusive buoyant hull portions 301a-d that directly protrude from a main hull structure or frame 310. As seen in, for example, FIG. 3, each of the hull portions 301 a-d is not attached to the ship 300 by struts or any other attaching structure.

Weatherly, on the other hand, fails to teach or suggest directly coupling a plurality of independent buoyant hull portions to the main body of a ship. Weatherly, at, *e.g.*, FIGS. 1-2 and column 2, line 14 to column 3, line 9, teaches a sailboat that includes a hull 10 (which the Examiner regards as a main body). A board member 42 is rigidly held to the hull 10 by two support members 44. Beneath the board member 42 is a pontoon 46 (which the Examiner regards as a hull portion). A rudder 54 (which the Examiner also regards as a hull portion) is provided at one end of the hull 10. As such, the pontoon 46 cannot reasonably be regarded as being directly coupled to the hull 10. Moreover, there is no indication in Weatherly that the rudder 54, even if it can reasonably be regarded as a hull portion, is buoyant. Accordingly, Weatherly fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 18.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, claims 8-16, 18 and 24 are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 425.455.5575. **If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicants' attorney that claims 8-16, 18 and 24 are in condition for allowance, the Applicants' attorney respectfully requests the Examiner to telephone the undersigned prior to issuing an Office Action in this case.**

In the event additional fees are due as a result of this amendment, you are hereby authorized to charge such payment to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

Respectfully submitted,

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